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DISPATCH NO. MASA-1531

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SECURITY INFORMATION  
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TO : Chief, EE  
Attention: ☐ ☐  
FROM : Chief of Station, Vienna *304*

DATE: 11 April 1952

SUBJECT: GENERAL— Operational

SPECIFIC— French Resistance Movement in the Tirol and Vorarlberg

Transmitted herewith is a translation of Gröller's USAGE Report concerning the French Resistance Movement in the Tirol and Vorarlberg. ☐ recalls that ☐ was looking for a copy of this report and it is being forwarded in the event that the matter still is of interest to Headquarters.

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FORM NO. 51-28A  
MAR. 1949

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**FRENCH-LED ANTI-SOVIET RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IN TIROL AND FORARLBERG**

Translation of Usage Report P/02466, date of information:

November 1950, Source: Forarilberg Police Official (TT 2)

1. The information in this report was provided by Source on the basis of personal research. Source has personal contact with the leading members of the French-sponsored resistance movement in Tirol and Forarilberg.

2. The French-sponsored resistance movement is the creation of the French Gendarme (Captain) PETIT who lives in Rum, near Innsbruck (personal data appended).

3. PETIT's resistance movement (subsequently referred to as RM) is not actually an improvisation set up on PETIT's own responsibility. The organization is well known to the French War Ministry and stands in a command relationship to the Ministry. Source established this fact in the following manner. He (in his capacity as Austrian Police official) reported an incident involving members of the RM to the French IS in Innsbruck. The French IS was apparently not informed about the organization and sent an officer to Paris to find out if the RM had any official backing. When he returned Source was informed that the RM was a legal institution set up within the frame work of the French Military plans.

4. The purpose of the RM is to build up a leadership Kadre for partisan activities in the rear of the Soviet front in the event of a conflict in which Austria is occupied. The operational areas of the resistance units in the Tirol-Forarilberg areas are the sectors Allgäu - the mountains north of the Inn River, the Forarilberg mountains north of Bludenz, the "Hinterer Dregenserwald" and the Kleinwalsertal.

5. The RM is organized for the time being only in Tirol and Forarilberg. There are plans, however, to extend the organization to South Tirol and to the remaining sections of Austria. The members of the organization believe they are part of a all-European resistance movement.

6. The RM is a secret organization. For security reasons it has no name; there are no lists of members and there are no operational records kept. The organization is modeled on the Soviet cell system improved by lessons learned by the Maquis and the civilian resistance group in France during the war. Cell meetings - 3 to 4 men each - restrict themselves to social activities. It is hoped that the Forarilberg alone the organization can produce a battalion (400 men) of resistance fighters.

7. The French leaders of the RM, Captain PETIT, has under him an Austrian resistance leader (who is de facto the Commander of the RM) named Felix LEITNER, resident of Innsbruck. Other leading members known to Source are: Franz Karl Josef BUSCH; Othmar GORBACH, Wilhelm ROLLMANN, Sigbert ZECH; Hans WRIGL; Josef (Sepp) BURGER, Friedrich ELONG; Josef WIRTH, Herbert NUSSBAUMER; Josef HARTFINKL and Edwin LIEBHICH (personal data appended).

8. The RM has weapons at its disposal. However, the weapons have not been handed out to the cells or individuals. The Forarilberg group has 40 crates of weapons at its disposal which contain a total of 120 rifles, 40 submachine guns (machine pistols), 40 pistols, steel helmets and uniforms. The weapons are

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from old German stocks and the uniforms are American but no insignias are worn. The buttons are plain. The 40 crates are allegedly still held by the French in the palace in Bludenz. The French originally (two years ago) had issued weapons to EM members (including LIEBICH, HAGSPIEL, BERGER and RUSCH). However, after it was discovered that RUSCH tried to sell six sub-machine guns, six rifles and six pistols for 27,000 schilling, the French recalled all weapons issued. They succeeded in getting all but one crate back. (Captain PETIT apparently does not hold the incident against RUSCH because RUSCH was in desperate financial need and the sale was actually never consummated) The quantity of weapons held by the French for the EM now is double the 1948 allocation.

Each of the 40 crates contain weapons for a cell of 4 men: 3 rifles, 1 submachine gun, 1 army rifle and 4 steel helmets. LEITNER, the Austrian chief of the EM is attempting to have modern U.S. weapons substituted for the German rifles. It is not known whether he is being successful or not.

9. The membership of the EM, especially the leadership group, is composed chiefly of former members of the Waffen-SS. Their motivations for joining are varied. Their anti-Bolshevik feelings were an important factor but the problem of their daily bread was also important: thru French contacts of the EM many individuals subject to punishment under the de-nazification laws were saved from the clutches of the law. The Nazi records of many of the EM members have disappeared from offices of the French Occupation Authorities.

10. Source has not been able to notice any neo-Nazi activity within the EM. The EM members seem disinterested in politics and Captain PETIT is such a strong opponent of Nazism that he would not tolerate any activity on the part of the members. There has also been no tendency to work with the VdU.

11. The French are trying to keep the Austrian Security Directorates from learning too much about the EM. For instance, when LIEBICH was arrested by the Austrian Police in December 1949 for using false identity documents, the French took him over, moved him to Germany and got him a job so that he could not reveal information on the EM in the course of a trial in Austria. The French watch carefully for any leaks of information on the EM to the Austrian Police.

12. An example of French watchfulness is the following: some time ago, during a meeting between General BETHOUART and State Secretary GRAP, GRAP indicated that he knew about the EM and expressed his fear that it could become a center for neo-Nazi activities. Captain PETIT launched an extensive investigation and his assistants were unable to determine how the leak had occurred.

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13. EM members suspected of insecurity are "put on ice" and not thrown out in an effort to avoid further "treason". Those "put on ice" still believe they are members but they are no longer given access to operational information. This has apparently happened to RUSCH, GORBACH and other members of the Bludenz group who tried to sell weapons.

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14. Source has not yet been able to ascertain whether or not selected members of the RM receive special training, such as W/T training. There is, however, a group of former Luftwaffe pilots, headed by WEIGL, which could be used for drop operations. Allegedly the group has at its disposal 3 training planes, type Klemm which they use to survey the area of future RM operations. Five of the flyers from the WEIGL group from Vorarlberg were given a special training course which was financed by the French Ministry of War to the tune of 30,000 schilling. It is alleged that Felix LEITNER has undergone special training in North Africa and that in the summer of 1939 he obtained a pilots licence.

15. The financing of the RM group appears weak. Many of the members made a livelihood in the smuggling game even after they joined the RM. They ran well organized business, including armed convoys. Because of the improvement in the economic conditions in Austria and because of the tighter police controls, the smuggling business became less lucrative and has now virtually come to an end. As a result, many of the RM members were left penniless. This explains the BUSCH attempt to sell weapons. (BUSCH is supposed to have developed a new type of electric contact mine which the French are examining. He hopes to make enough money on the deal to pay his smuggling fines and set himself up as an honest merchant.)

16. Source claims to have noticed signs recently that an unidentified American group has approached LEITNER with a request that he organize a resistance movement on behalf of the USA. It is assumed that LEITNER refused this plan because he is so completely dependant on the French.

17. The French are working very actively at building up the RM. Allegedly a French Colonel DAVISON, working in Feldkirch, is trying to recruit former Wehrmacht officers. He is said to have approached a paratroop major, working for the Austrian District Headquarters in Feldkirch, and a hotel owner in Innsbruck.

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PERSONAL DATA ON INDIVIDUALS MENTIONED IN P/02466

A. PETIT, Jean, French Gendarmerie Captain (usually in uniform), resides in Villa Reindl in Rum near Innsbruck; approximately 40 years old; middle height; dark hair - crew hair cut. PETIT has been in Rum for approximately two years. He replaced a French officer who was the original organizer of the RM but who apparently was not adequate. PETIT's official assignment is as Commandant of the French camp "Reichenau" (Rum). In October 1950 PETIT approached the former German Major RUEFF, who is the District Chief of the Junge Front for Tirol, and suggested that the Junge Front should serve as an intelligence gathering organization for the RM with Communist activities as its target. RUEFF agreed in principle and demanded 15,000 schillings a month. PETIT seemed agreeable but demanded that the Junge Front should join the French-sponsored resistance movement. Source does not know whether or not the deal was ever completed. Among the projects which PETIT is trying to support are a mobilization plan for the Austrian Gendarmerie and police in Tirol, rifle practice for the populace in general and encouragement of competitive shooting exercises for organized group (Organisator der Tiroler Landesvergleichsschiessen). PETIT is the chief recruiting officer for the French Foreign Legion. PETIT never got along with French General Marcel DESCOURT, who until recently was stationed in the French Zone of Austria. He claims that DESCOURT, who was Commandant of the Maquis in the Rhone sector during the war, was trying to sabotage PETIT's resistance efforts in Tirol. PETIT claimed that he would use his influence in Paris to have DESCOURT recalled. Captain PETIT was a German PW for a long time and was severely mistreated. He is considered a French patriot and honest in his anti-Communist feelings. It is expected that he would stay in Austria with his resistance movement in the event of hostilities.

B. Felix LEITNER, born 13 October 1908 in Vienna; Austrian citizen; no religious preferences; married; two children; attended commercial high school; lives in Camp Rum near Innsbruck; during the war he was in the Waffen-SS with the rank of Hauptsturmführer. He commanded a special battalion. His official job is as chauffeur to Captain PETIT whom he accompanies on trips to Italy, Germany and France. (The Swiss will not let him enter their country).

C. Wilhelm ROLLMANN, born 23 August 1917 in Brieden, Koblenz District, Germany; German citizen; Roman Catholic; divorced; employed as miner in the Kops mine, operated by the firm Heimbach and Schneider; residence in Zeinisjeck (Parthenau Post Office); permanent residence Franz Plattnerstrasse 290, Zirl 1/Tirol; he attended primary and professional school. ROLLMANN entered Austria in 1948 coming from the Italian front. He was made French PW in July of 1945 and released in March of 1948. After his release he continued to work as butcher for a French unit in Camp Rum. He began his career as miner in July 1949. ROLLMANN was a member of the SA and fought in the war as member of the SS-Standarte "Deutschland".

D. Franz Karl Josef BUSCH, born 22 February 1922 in Schoppernau, Bregenz District; Austrian citizen; Roman Catholic; married; electrician; resides Belrupstrasse 15, Bregenz, Vorarlberg. BUSCH served with Department IV of the RHSA and worked on sabotage problems. He was interned for a considerable time after the war.

E. Othmar BORRACH, resides Graf Wilhelmstrasse 2 in Bregenz; nickname among SS members: "Gigi"; former member of the Waffen-SS with a long internment record. He was "put on ice" by LEITNER in January 1950. He was released in

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favor of the October strikes, although he was not a Communist.

F. Sigbert ZECH, born 22 December 1912 in Bregenz; Austrian citizen; Roman Catholic; married; white collar worker; resides at Werdenbergerstrasse 8 in Bludenz. He was an artillery sergeant in the German Army. In 1949 he was sentenced to three months for issuing identity cards without authorization. He was at this time police official attached to the Provincial Headquarters in Bludenz.

G. Josef BUNKER, born 17 June 1914 in Tschagguns, Bludenz District; Austrian citizen; Roman Catholic; married; mechanic; employed by the Gallehr Company in Dalaas. Permanent residence Ziegersberg 184, in Tschagguns. BUNKER was conscripted by the Austrian Army in 1934 and remained in uniform until 1945. Early in 1945 he went home with a false travel pass and never joined his unit again. Instead he became a leader in the resistance movement. After the war he showed definite Leftist tendencies but his current political attitude is not known.

H. Rene REICH, personal data not known. Allegedly lives in Hall in Tirol and is a flight instructor at the Innsbruck airfield.

I. Friedrich BLOND, born 29 April 1920 in Braunau, a/Inn; Austrian citizen; no religious preferences; single; residing in Parthenen 18. He enlisted voluntarily on 25 April 1938 in the "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler" in Berlin; reached the rank of Ober Scharführer. He returned from captivity in 1946 as a 75% invalid.

K. Josef WIRTH, born 31 August 1908 in Andelsbuch, Bregenz District; Austrian citizen; Roman Catholic; single; horse and pig dealer; resides in Andelsbuch, Wirth 43. He moved to Berlin in 1933 and was an early member of the SA. His war record is not known. When he returned to Verarlberg he was arrested and sent to France where he served for several months in a mine. He returned to Austria but was re-arrested and spent a long time in Camp Brederis.

L. Herbert RUSSEBAUMER, born 15 January 1916 in Andelsbuch, Bregenz District; Austrian citizen; Roman Catholic; married; stonemason by trade; resides in Andelsbuch, Wirth 53. He became a member of the Schutzpolizei in Munich on 1 April 1938 and was later transferred at his own request to the "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler". After the war he was interned by the French in Camp Lechaux and Brederis.

M. Josef HAGSPITEL, born 14 April 1924 in Möggers, Bregenz District; Austrian citizen; Roman Catholic; single; day laborer; resides in Möggers. After the war he was a member of the Verarlberg Gendarmerie but was dismissed for cause (criminal charge).

N. Edwin LIEBIG, born 7 April 1921 in Reichenberg; Czechoslovakian; German citizen; Protestant; single; resides in Offenburg, Baden, Germany; former residence Bludenz, St. Peterstrasse 7; ex-member of the Waffen-SS. Although he had a foot amputated during the war he was given a "Wehrwolf" assignment in the last days of the war, which he never carried out. However, for his assignment he was given false documents in the name of "HAGSPITEL". With these

documents he got a job as treasurer in the Hindens District Headquarters. Although he did his job honestly, his true identity was discovered and he was arrested on 7 December 1949. As stated in paragraph 11 of the main report, the French moved him to Germany and gave him a job in Offenbourg. LEBERICH wants badly to return to Austria and is prepared to accept a prison term and pay back pension payments drawn under his false name because he wants to marry the young widow Maria SCHLONK, nee [redacted], who lives in Hindens Schlonschplatz 3. Maria refused to leave Austria. Captain PHILIP will do everything in his power to keep LEBERICH from returning to Austria and standing trial.

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